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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000503

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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT ENDORSES CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Mark M. Boulware for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (U) Parliamentary Resolution: On September 14 the Emergency Session of the National Assembly, with 56 of its 95 members present, adopted a resolution supporting the report of a Special Commission established to review the causes of the political crisis and laying out recommendations for an exit strategy. The Resolution (full text forwarded to AF/W) is non-binding. Highlights of the resolution include:

Condemnation of President Abdallahi: "Notes the negative results of the political crisis for which former President Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdallahi is considered responsible" and cites the President for authoritarianism, systematic blockage of the Parliament, bad management, excessive travel, worsening living conditions, and "adventurous management" that threatened a "bloody confrontation among our military and security forces."

Accepting the coup: "Notes" the measures taken -- without bloodshed -- by the military and security forces to "temporarily" assume the powers of the presidency while maintaining other democratic institutions and liberties intact "to the great satisfaction of the majority of the Mauritanian people."

Support for return to constitutional order: "Affiliates itself with the strong and urgent demand expressed nationally and internationally for the rapid return to the natural constitutional order."

National Dialogue towards new presidential elections: Calls for establishment of a "credible mechanism for consultation and follow-up" consisting of delegations from (a) a delegation of the parliament groups weighted to reflect their representation, (b) a delegation of the government and High State Council, (c) a delegation of major political parties "whose lists will be determined by the parliamentary commissions," and, (d) representatives of Mauritania's partners: the UN, AU, EU, Arab League, and OIC. That dialogue should consider roadmap based on following elements:

- (a) presidential elections in 12-14 months,
- (b) political neutrality of the administration and high State Council and exclusion as candidates of judges and military as well as those that exercise executive responsibilities that could influence the vote,
- (c) re-establishment of the National Independent Electoral Commission with appropriate funding. Invitation to the largest number possible of African, Arab and Islamic institutions to observe the elections.
- (d) upon agreement on a roadmap, creation of a new national

unity government for the transition to elections.

Rejection of Military authority on parliament: Rejects Article 8 of the High State Council's Constitutional Charter that claims the right to legislate by edict if the parliament is blocked.

¶2. (C) Context: The resolution passed after several days of parliamentary gridlock. Locals suggest that there was extra pressure from General Aziz following weekend meetings with the Tunisian and French Ambassadors. Ahmed Ould Daddah's RFD parliamentarians boycotted the session although many of the demands Ould Daddah made are included -- particularly the call for a set date. The RFD still did not associate itself with the resolution for lack of a clear statement that members of the High State Council (i.e. Aziz) cannot run and the lack of any language that would define the role of the military in future governance.

¶3. (C) Wrong on so many levels: Advocates of the coup are likely to champion this as an example of the remaining constitutional institutions playing their role to ensure a rapid return to national constitutional legitimacy. On basic questions of procedure, this is wrong. The "Emergency Session" was called by a "High State Council" with no legitimacy. The Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies reject the validity of the session; hence, both sessions are now chaired by Vice Presidents. The Resolution reflects but 59% of the deputies since the others are boycotting. And, the session takes place under the yolk of a military regime. Even if taken on its merits, the resolution

NOUAKCHOTT 00000503 002 OF 002

has many failings. The "National Dialogue" is heavily skewed in favor of the coup makers with the parliamentary delegation being weighted in favor of the majority, the High State Council and its government having a third of the votes, and the participation of other political parties being dictated by the pro-coup parties in the parliament. Such a mechanism clearly excludes anti-coup parties. Civil Society, labor and business are not considered as parties to this national dialogue.
Boulware